

Book Review

The Administration of Technical Assistance—Growth in the Americas. By Philip M. Glick. The University of Chicago Press. 390 pgs. \$5.50

Reviewed by Elmer Gertz

This is one of a series of books on technical cooperation in Latin America, sponsored by The National Planning Association. It is the first complete story of the organization and management of the technical assistance programs South of the Rio Grande, written by the former general counsel of the Institute of Inter-American Affairs and of the Technical Co-operation Administration and one of the drafters of the immortal Point Four Program. It is likely to become a classic in its special but increasingly important field.

During the more than thirty years that I have known Philip M. Glick, I have always been impressed by his earnestness, understanding and integrity, and the sort of subdued brilliance and quiet drive of the man. He was one of a group of classmates at the University, all personal friends, who rose to the manifold Governmental opportunities under the New Deal in its first aureoled days. They were all, and none more so than Mr. Glick, highly articulate, social minded and dedicated men, who helped give tone and meaning to the new administration. There was nothing blase nor passive in their temperaments. They welcomed public service because of the larger opportunities it offered for men of vision. Each one was capable of filling remunerative posts in private business, but they

preferred the spiritually greater rewards under the dashing new regime in Washington.

I mention these things about Mr. Glick and his associates, because they explain the qualities of this book. It is a thorough study, in all of its ramifications, of a complex program. The book deals with the origins and history, the legislation, the regulations, the economics and sociology and philosophy, the agencies and personalities, in all of their technicalities and details. It never sacrifices the hard core of facts for the sake of brilliance or wit. But it is not lacking in the human understanding, nor in the meaning behind the bare recital of facts and figures.

The roots of the program run a long way back, but this book deals only with the three periods closest to our own day: the period immediately prior to 1940, the decade from 1940 to 1950, and the period which begins with President Truman's inaugural address of January 1949 when "Point Four" was officially born. "The past is prologue," Mr. Glick concludes and finds from his long survey of the history "that the basic administrative problems are four in number: the choice of instruments for effective co-operation; the structure needed for program planning; the measures necessary to secure competent technicians in adequate number; and the type of organization that can best serve the objectives of the program and the growing needs of American foreign policy." He devotes long chapters to each of these four basic administrative problems.

Mr. Glick is a diplomat with a difference. He does not hesitate to deal candidly with each of the problems, albeit in sober language. Any sensations are implicit. The problems are compounded by the general weakness of democracy in Latin America, the frequent changes of administration, the highly centralized structure and function of government, the shortage of trained professional people, the inadequacy of personnel practices, widespread corruption, the red tape, and much besides. One sometimes wonders that any thing is achieved.

The great bulk of the work performed in Latin America in the bilateral program is done through the so-called *servicio*. Mr. Glick describes it as a new type of public agency, "probably the most interesting mechanism for international co-operation that has been created." The *servicio* is a means whereby a partnership, in effect, is created between the appropriate ministry of the "host government" and the technical mission of the United States.

The book is so packed with details on this and other matters that it would be difficult and unfair to sum-

marize it with the brevity appropriate to a review in a non-technical publication. There are certain facts that loom up in my mind as particularly interesting, where others might justly select other facts, as even more important. Mr. Glick feels, as I do, that the success of the program should be measured by the ease with which citizens of the host country are able to train themselves to carry on the work alone. No one should look forward to permanent spoon-feeding by the United States.

In a final chapter, significantly called "Plural Efforts Toward a Common Goal," Mr. Glick sums up the lessons as he sees them and the hopes for the future. He takes each kind of program and tells its strength and weakness with the knowledge of one who has lived with each problem but does not content himself with personal knowledge alone. He shows the weakness, not to say danger, of regarding the Point Four program, for example, as an inducement to poorer countries not to plunge into the Communist sea of troubles. It is clear that he prefers to think of that program, as well as other forms of technical assistance, as a means of benefiting all parties in all respects, the United States as well as the countries it aids, least of all in a military sense, most of all as an incentive to genuine world cooperation. That way lies world progress and universal welfare, peace in our day and beyond.

"This," he is quick to add, "is written out of a belief that the future can be built—that we need not despair of it and can do more than just hope for the best—a belief, not a conviction. Man's intractability may ultimately defeat all efforts at social construction, but the belief has as much warrant as the foreboding in the story of man's past."

Those who share the optimist's belief and who would help implement it should read Mr. Glick's book even if it is not always easy going. In that respect, it is typical of the road that lies ahead.